

# CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES



## PLASTERERS AND STUCCO MASON



### WHAT DO PLASTERERS AND STUCCO MASON DO?

PLASTERERS AND STUCCO MASON are skilled trades people in the construction industry who apply coatings of plaster and stucco to interior walls, ceilings, and partitions, or to exterior surfaces. Plastering provides a long lasting surface that is fire-resistant, muffles noise, insulates against heat and cold, and may be decorative as well.

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INTEREST AREA  
**REALISTIC**



Traditionally, the title Plasterers has referred to those who work on interior surfaces and the title Stucco Masons has referred to those who work on exterior surfaces. However, Plasterers and Stucco Masons in California (and most locations in the United States) are usually called Plasterers, and will be in this description.

Plastering is recognized as one of the oldest building tradecrafts, and dates back to ancient Egypt and Rome. Plaster was used to cover walls, ceilings, and other surfaces. Plastering has been increasing in popularity in recent years due to the introduction of newer, less costly materials and techniques and its attractiveness and soundproofing effect.

Plastering jobs begin with surface and plaster preparation. Plasterer apprentices or helpers mix the ingredients that make up a variety of plaster pastes. When necessary, they erect scaffolding. Plasterers will normally prepare a surface for application and apply the paste to the surface. Plaster application may be done by hand with the use of a trowel, and other tools, or may be sprayed on the surface. Most plastering jobs take three coatings of different plaster pastes. Journey-level Plasterers must be skilled in various methods of plastering.

Plasterers use a variety of hand and power tools and equipment such as:

- Trowels
- Hawks
- Floats
- Brushes
- Straightedges
- Plaster-mixing machines
- Piston-type pumps

Plasterers performs the following tasks:

- Direct workers to mix plaster to the desired consistency and to erect scaffolding.
- Figure the amounts of materials to be mixed and observe the mixed paste results.
- Install guide wires on the surfaces of walls and ceilings to indicate the thickness of plaster or stucco pastes.
- Apply coats of plaster or stucco to walls, ceilings, or partitions of buildings, using a trowel, brush, or spray gun.
- Apply weatherproof, decorative coverings to the outside of buildings.
- Create decorative textures in the finish coat, using sand, pebbles, stones, and colors.
- Shape and install ornamental plaster pieces, panels, and trim.

## WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Plasterers and Stucco Masons include:

- Equipment Selection – Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
- Active Listening – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Monitoring – Observing materials and activities to determine how the job is proceeding and make needed changes.
- Mathematics – Ability to estimate size, distance, quantity, time, cost, or materials needed to perform the work.
- Building and Construction – Knowledge of materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.
- Dynamic Strength – Ability to use muscle strength continuously for a long time.
- Balance – Ability to keep or regain one's balance or stay upright when in an unstable position.

- Near Vision – Ability to see details at close range.
- Extent Flexibility – The ability to bend, stretch, twist, or reach with your body, arms, and/or legs.
- Manual Dexterity – Ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, and your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- Wrist-Finger Speed – Ability to make fast, simple, repeated movements of the fingers, hands, and wrists.
- Arm-Hand Steadiness – The ability to keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.

## WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Most plastering jobs are in the construction industry and work is done indoors and outdoors. Plasterers do work in outdoor locations to apply stucco, exterior wall insulation, and decorative finish systems. Plasterers frequently work on scaffolding that may be high above the ground. Work locations can be dirty and dusty, and plastering materials can irritate the eyes, skin, and lungs. They may need to wear protective clothing for their skin, eye goggles, and even respirators. The job is physically demanding and requires a lot of standing, bending, stooping, lifting, and reaching overhead while maintaining balance. Their work on a job site usually follows the work done by other trade workers such as carpenters, roofers, plumbers, and electricians. They frequently work in crews of just a few workers. Plasterers will usually need transportation to travel to and from jobs that are not usually reached by public transportation.

## Union Membership

Union Plasterers in California belong to the Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons' International Association of the United States and Canada.

## WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the

Employment Development Department (EDD)  
Labor Market Information Division (LMID):

Estimated number of workers in 2000: 15,600  
Estimated number of workers in 2010: 19,600  
Projected Growth 2000-2010: 25.6%  
Est. openings due to separations by 2010: 3,300  
*These figures do not include self-employment.*

Plasterers will grow faster than average compared with all occupations in California.

### Trends

The projected trend through 2010 is for faster than average employment growth for Plasterers (25.2%) than for all Construction and Extraction Occupations (24.2%). Employment opportunities vary depending upon the local and State economies.

### WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

#### California Earnings

##### Plasterers and Stucco Masons 2002 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$12.07 to \$20.98
Average hourly wage	\$16.96
Average annual wage	\$35,277

*Source: Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID.*

Annual earnings for all Plasterers may be significantly affected by local weather conditions. Union apprentices start at a minimum of \$9.75 per hour, or higher with experience. Apprentice Plasterers get raises every six months after completing 750 hours of work, until they reach journey-level, which usually takes about four years. Nonunion Plasterers normally earn less than union Plasterers.

#### Hours

Plasterers usually work five, eight-hour days during the week. Most of the work is done during the spring, summer, and early fall. Bad weather normally affects outdoor stucco or plastering jobs but not indoor jobs. Plasterers at many California job sites can work year-round.

### Benefits

Benefits for union Plasterers include medical, dental, and vision insurance plans, vacation, sick leave, and pension plans. Most nonunion workers do not have benefits, or must negotiate with employers for them.

### HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

#### Education and Training

Apprentice Plasterers must be at least 18 and possess physical fitness sufficient to perform the work of a Plasterer. The apprenticeship program lasts about four years and includes 144 hours per year of classroom training instruction and a minimum of 6,000 hours of work on the job. This training is usually done on weekends.

#### Licensing and Certification

Once the training and on the job work experience are completed, the apprentice is certified to be a journey-level Plasterer.

#### Continuing Education

There is no continuing education requirement following completion of the apprenticeship program. Training in skill enhancement, journey-person upgrading, and new materials and systems is available through union training programs.

### HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

For those Plasterers who belong to a union, registration with the union local hiring hall is the procedure to gain employment. For nonunion Plasterers, direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Word-of-mouth leads and newspaper advertisements can also be fruitful. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Plastering Contractors. California job openings can be found at various on-line job-listing systems including CalJOBS<sup>SM</sup> at [www.caljobs.ca.gov](http://www.caljobs.ca.gov) or at America's Job Bank at [www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us).

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county,

visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at [www.calmis.ca.gov](http://www.calmis.ca.gov). Find further job search assistance at your nearest Job Service office at [www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm) or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site at [www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop](http://www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop).

### WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Advancement opportunities for Plasterers include jobs as foremen, supervisors, estimators, and even plastering contractors. These opportunities depend upon individual experience, abilities, training, initiative, and industry contacts.

### OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association of the United States and Canada  
14405 Laurel Place, Suite 300  
Laurel, MD 20707  
(301) 470-4200  
[www.opcmia.org](http://www.opcmia.org)

Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries – International  
803 West Broad Street, Suite 600  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
(703) 534-8300  
[www.awci.org](http://www.awci.org)

Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America  
333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 200  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 548-3118  
[www.info@agc.org](mailto:www.info@agc.org)

Information regarding Plasterer contractor's licensing can be obtained from:  
CA Contractors State License Board  
9821 Business Park Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
(800) 321-2752  
[www.csrb.ca.gov](http://www.csrb.ca.gov)

CA Division of Apprenticeship Standards  
For the closest district office, visit  
[www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/das.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/das.html), or call  
Apprenticeship Standards Information  
listed in your telephone directory  
business white pages

Employment Projections by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm)

Employment and Wages by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

### RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Painters and Paperhanglers	No. 148
Cement Masons	No. 181
Brick Masons	No. 204
Drywall Installers and Tapers	No. 524

### OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

#### SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)

Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	47-2051
Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers	47-2081
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	47-2141
Paperhanglers	47-2142
Plasterers and Stucco Masons	47-2161

#### O\*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)

Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers	47-2081.00
Ceiling Tile Installers	47-2081.01
Plasterers and Stucco Masons	47-2161.00
Helpers - Painters, Paperhanglers, Plasterers, and Stucco Masons	47-3014.00

#### OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)

Concrete and Terrazzo Finishers	87311
Plasterers and Stucco Masons	87317
Painters and Paperhanglers, Construction and Maintenance	87402

#### DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)

Painter	840.381-010
Paperhanger	841.381-010
Plasterer	842.361-018
Drywall Applicator	842.361-030
Cement Mason	844.364-010

